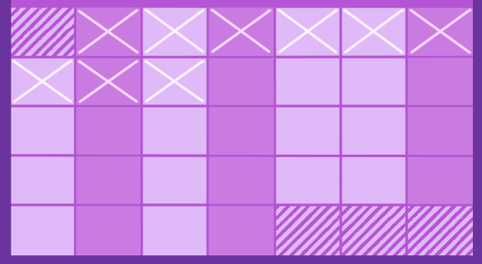
TEN
THOUSAND
STARS
An English Vocaloid Zine
@cylfa_art

Circles
XII
IX
repeating
i'm dying i'm breathing
i'm crying i'm healing
ADELLA

39k Subscribers

Stream Schedule



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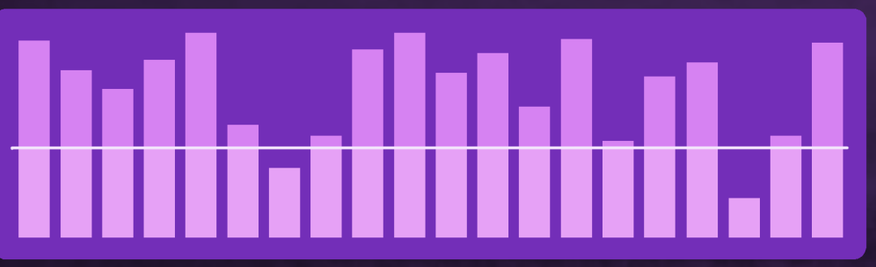


My steel Knight. . .

404 ERROR

REBOOTING

Anyone and only I need you.

METAMORPHOSIS
IS COMPLETE

COCOON
RIGHT NOW

Everything I touch

Gold like Midas

BIG AL

YOU LEFT ME
COVERED IN
GOLD

Resuming Download, Please Wait

By Bookworm39

How is she supposed to go out like this?

Amber stares at her own exhausted reflection in the window, fiddling with the buttons of her denim jacket. The idea of leaving her apartment makes her sick, but the doctors insisted it would be good for her. So no matter how much her hips burn with phantom pain and no matter how much she feels like she'll shatter if someone touches her, she has to leave.

Stop by the museum she used to volunteer at, then pick up a new sketchbook at the craft store. A bit of time with people she knew, then a bit of time with strangers. Maybe that would help loosen her nerves, make her feel less like she was suffocating.

Last week she spoke to some of her old acquaintances over text, and they passed the word on to the rest. "Don't say anything about it. Don't ask where she's been. Don't ask how she's been."

The tiny voice in the back of her head says that they won't bother to ask, anyway.

It's a Wednesday in April, so only one set of eyes look up when Amber opens the door.

Whatever she plans to say falls apart when she sees the blond behind the front desk. She hadn't expected them to still be here after all these years. Their internship must be up by now, but they're still wearing their name tag on a polo embroidered with the museum's logo. There hadn't even *been* a uniform when Amber was last here.

Amber knows she looks different now. Her eyes carry the weariness of twice the years she's lived, and there's no hiding the

walker (*rollator*, technically, since it has a seat; but Amber refuses to remember the word). She doesn't know if she expects Robin to recognize her.

But a tiny smile forms on their lips, and they go through the customer service script the way they did for frequent customers, with the tone of "you know where everything is, don't you?" For a moment, Amber feels like she's home.

Nothing is in the exact place she remembered. One exhibit moved several meters down the hall, its place now filled by framed photos that had been gathering dust in storage. There are three glass cases where there used to be two. There's a few new reference books sitting below an artist's collection.

When she heads for the exit, she hears a voice call her name. She looks back at the person she used to share that front desk with, the person she used to call her best friend.

And despite herself, Amber finds herself sitting and talking to someone she once thought she'd never see again.

The two used to sit across from each other in the library, a splitter cable plugged into Robin's laptop. Robin worked on the museum's webpage in one tab, with Playmoss running music in another. Amber would let them control the music while she doodled in her notebook.

Robin's music taste was almost alien to Amber, who grew up on oldie rock and jazz. Robin's playlist was all synthesized, electric noise, calm plasticky beats, or bright beeps and clicks. Most of it was in English, but there were a handful that Robin noted as being Japanese.

Each of the synthesized voices came with a character. Robin would walk her through each one when first playing a song with that character, along with sharing ones made for specific songs, videos, or even ideas. Amber couldn't keep track of all of them, but she tried her best. It was Robin's thing, and she loved Robin too much not to try.

Neither remembers whose idea it was first. Amber hadn't coordinated her Halloween costumes with another person since she was a little girl. But Teto, one of the few characters Amber remembered the name of, her hair looked almost exactly like Amber's, just a little more vibrant and curly. It was the perfect fit.

Robin considered a blonde character, but Amber convinced them that the white-haired girl was a better fit for how light their hair was. Really, Amber just knew that Haku's outfit would be perfect for Robin, all sleek silver and black and indigo.

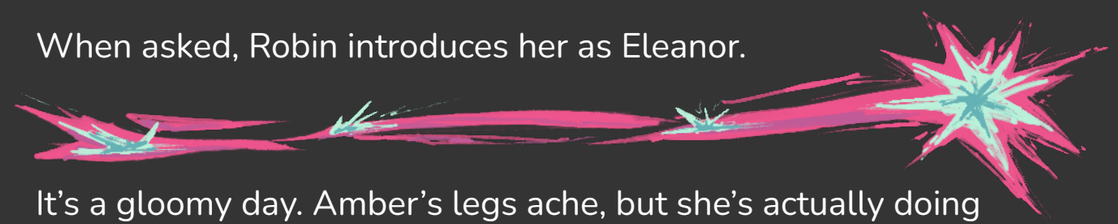
Even after not seeing each other for years, Robin feels the same. Their sneakers squeak against the damp concrete; their hair only reaches their shoulders but is parted the same way it always was. They smile the same smile when they see Amber waiting for them at the smoothie shop, pulling their earbuds out one at a time.

When Robin drops their phone into her their, Amber catches a glimpse of the song they were listening to. Its cover art is stark black and white, slashed with mint and pink, a name written in the corner of the image. She can't explain it, but it looks like something Robin would listen to.

The charm is still on Robin's bag. It's barely two inches tall, dangling from the loop where the strap connects. It's not the same plain black bag Robin had been using years ago—this one has silver hardware instead of gold—but it's the same charm Amber bought them for Christmas with the violet chain and everything.

Haku has company now: another charm hangs from a star shaped clasp, sitting a bit higher. She's mostly monochrome, too, with red accents instead of blue-purple; these charms provide the only color in Robin's outfit.

When asked, Robin introduces her as Eleanor.



It's a gloomy day. Amber's legs ache, but she's actually doing alright.

She's leaned back in her office chair, fiddling with a pencil. The bag of markers is spilled out over the desk, and her sketchbook is open to a blank page.

It helps to ground her, drawing an abstract pattern based on something she's seen. Lately it's been music videos, but she's

finally running low on inspiration.

‘Teto utau english songs’

When she types it into YouTube’s search bar, she isn’t expecting much. Well… she isn’t expecting *anything*. She remembers what Robin said about Teto’s voice, how it was rough in Japanese and even rougher in English. Surely there weren’t going to be many English songs, right?

But there is… a lot. New, too.

She scrolls for a little before she clicks one. It’s a cover; an acoustic song from an alternative artist she listened to, a song she played for Robin once or twice. It was the opposite of what Robin listened to usually, just a ukulele and drums and one human voice.

It’s strange, hearing the ukulele paired with Teto’s vocals. Not bad, just… strange.

“Kasane teto english”

“teto english voice update”

“synthv teto songs”

Twelve songs later (mentally noting down each song), the page is covered in jagged lines, tightly-packed rows of black and white with shots of red laced in between.

Shelley’s arms hold her tight. Amber hates her girlfriend seeing her like this, even though Shelley knows Amber’s story all too well. She isn’t judgmental or even surprised when Amber has a crying meltdown while packing.

She isn’t sure what it was. Maybe it was the reminder of her changed body, maybe it was the reminder of who she’d been just a few years ago. But now Amber’s sitting on the floor of her bedroom, her closet open and half-empty, surrounded by cardboard boxes with tears and snot running down her face.

She waited until her dad wasn’t home, just wanting to get the last of her stuff moved out without drama. A good thing too; he wouldn’t be nearly so understanding.

Instead she can turn and bury her face in her girlfriend’s chest, biting back the apologies that compulsively bubble up. Shelley’s hands gently run through Amber’s hair, careful not to catch when the curls turn to tangled knots.

Shelley mutters reassurances into Amber’s temple as one of those broken “I’m sorry”s escapes. Her voice breaks for a second, striking Amber’s heart and filling her with relief at the same time. She doesn’t like Shelley seeing her like this, but knowing she’s loved and cared for even like this is a strange comfort.

Amber doesn’t know when she starts tracing the stars on Shelley’s jacket. Even though there’s no real difference in texture between the paint and the denim, she can recreate the shapes without looking. Her girlfriend always shrugs off the title of ‘artist,’ saying her blueprints and scribbling on her clothes don’t compare to what Amber does.

Shelley offers to decorate some of Amber’s old sweatshirts, to teach her how to do it herself. Something with sketchy hearts, or the tulips Amber drew the other day. “*Something pretty*” and her own art is included in that. She doesn’t fully believe it, but she won’t deny it either.

She tries to keep her hands from shaking as she marks up the grey button-down. The lines aren’t the smooth rolling waves she was hoping for, but Amber figures—hopes—that it won’t be visible from a distance.

All the parts are tossed on her bed, along with her phone. The worn-out speakers play the sounds of crashing drums and light piano notes to keep her company as she pieces together this year’s Halloween costume.

She already owns the right kind of vest. Military-style, black with too many buttons along the front. It’s how she chooses to dress now, not because she loves it but because it’s as far as it can be from how she’d been forced to dress for years. Denim and leather and metal. Masculine in a way that never feels like it suits her.

But holding the vest up in the mirror, her hair sloppily tucked into pigtails… maybe she can work with this.

The bottoms were the hard part (she would never wear a skirt again if she could help it), but she loops the thin belt around the bell-shaped shorts and it looks good enough. There's a few loose chains she picked up from the craft store, and she doesn't know *exactly* where on the outfit to attach them yet, but they felt right.

She couldn't get accuracy, so she went for heart.

Amber's hands tremble again when she puts the shirt on. Button-downs always made her anxious, with the way her stomach fat pushed against the fabric. But when she tucks it into her pajama pants, she can't see how the sides of the shirt fail to overlap the way they do in the catalogs; and the extra buttons on the vest hold everything more securely.

She doesn't turn to look in the mirror this time. She knows whatever she sees won't look good, not to her, not after so many hours spent. She'd been taught to leave her art alone for a while, to not decide how she feels about it until days after finishing it. And it's too close to being done. She can't ruin it for herself now.

With how Shelley usually dresses, Amber isn't surprised to see her girlfriend wearing something incredibly simple as a Halloween costume. A pink button-down is paired with tan pants, finished with a blue ascot and sunglasses balanced on her head. Robin is dressed even more plainly, wearing a yellow knit pullover under a short navy jacket. Amber doesn't recognize the outfit; probably from one of those short and strange horror games that Robin likes so much.

For a moment Amber feels a flare of self-consciousness at how overdressed she is. She dims it by reminding herself that it's *just how these two are*, and it's snuffed out entirely when she sees the reactions.

"There you are, princess!" Shelley beams, running up the ramp to meet Amber. Wrapping her arm around her girlfriend's shoulders, Shelley asks, "How are you feelin'?"

"Good, honestly." Amber feels her face grow warm when Shelley kisses her cheek, moreso when she takes Amber's hands in her own.

"Oh, that's a *really* pretty color," Shelley says, looking down at Amber's coral pink nails. She looks back up and continues, "The red and pink is a good look for you."

"Yeah." The two women look down the ramp to Robin. They're staring at Amber, and despite themselves Amber catches the smile. "You look... that's really sick."

"Yeah, uh!" Amber takes a moment to make sure her phone and keys are secured to the rollator. "I saw she got a... redesign? Rework?" She doesn't know whether to admit that she only looked up Teto after seeing Robin again. "So, y'know, since we already did it once— uh, Haku didn't get one it looks like, so I didn't feel like I was leaving you out..."

Robin shrugs. "Eh, I guess that's what you get when your character's based around the idea of being insufferable."

Amber giggles, carefully walking down the ramp. "You guys look cool, too!"

"Yeah, your dorkass girlfriend is trying to get me to watch murder mysteries with her," Robin points over Amber's shoulder, earning an annoyed scoff.

"*Two* maximum! Like, you really *should* watch the first movie, but I *guess* you could go straight to the second one—"

"I have a day job, Shel."

"We both have day jobs! It's like four hours of your life! You could just say no if you don't want to watch them—"

"What makes you think I don't wanna watch them?"

"I—babe?"

"Yeah?" Amber stifles another laugh as she looks back at her girlfriend. Shelley leans over Amber's shoulder, pouting. Before Shelley can speak, Amber adds, "Yes, they're just like this."

Robin grins. "If I'm annoying you, that means I like you."

Shelley sticks her tongue out, finally getting Amber to crack. She feels the other two watching her, thinks she can feel a few passersby looking their way, but she doesn't mind.

11:46 PM

shrimpku.yums

LIVE

14

law.evading.ego.rock
yo can i have some

meiko_2004
Girl what is your problem!

electricangel

f.u.k.a.s.e
that looks realy unsafe do you wnat me to call 911

ch1m3ra.g1rl
Hey Len why do you keep pretending to be me? Can you change your profile photo?

Add a comment...

LavenderArts

KI
RA
BLOOD

Only One Out There

By PotatoVibes

With a shaky finger, Miku punched the numbers one by one into the payment confirmation pop up. The glow of her computer was the only light in the bedroom, and was barely strong enough to read the credit card that had been snatched from her mom's purse and temporarily relocated to her desk.

If her mom found out, she would be pissed.

Her monitor's glow cast jagged shadows from the few objects in her room. The plain bedframe, lone plushie in the corner, empty can left on her desk, the digital clock clicking over to 3:00. It was late enough, her mom wasn't awake. Miku would be fine.

Copy and pasting the message she'd poured her heart into the superchat box, a familiar voice rattled on in her headphones. Kasane Teto, her new favorite content creator, who she had been watching nightly for the past week, just got blown up by a creeper again. She'd been trying to get better at Minecraft, and it wasn't quite working out. Even with chat and Miku's encouragement, it seemed the next few streams would still be a struggle. Maybe she could do it if she just had more support...

It had been like night and day after she found Teto. Boring school days of filling her sketchbook just to go home to nothing in particular suddenly had purpose. Now she had a reason to get her homework done, someone to keep on her mind as she drew, inside jokes to learn, and a community to join. Everything just felt better.

The only problem was how their schedules overlapped. Even though they were in the same timezone, Teto liked to stay up late and wake up in the early afternoon, which meant her streams went late into the night. Which meant Miku's allowance this week had been spent on energy drinks.

Of course, she could always watch the vod back, Miku's individual support never really meant anything special after all! She was new here, and just one tiny chat member out of the thousands. Teto

didn't *know* her or anything, but it did feel a bit nice to indulge the similar feeling. And for her hard work, she'd probably like to hear about her impact, right? A superchat wouldn't be too out of line?

With a sharp breath, she swallowed her hesitation and pressed send on the message.

The thumping left in her chest was so strong, even though all that was on screen was Teto's calming smile as she began to build a house. She liked to check the donos every hour, and it was just past 3AM, so her message would get read soon, right? She hadn't expected her first time sending a superchat to feel so nerve wracking.

Miku let her vision glass over, mindlessly watching the game and Teto's expressions as she fought against her closing eyelids. She snapped back to life as the scene changed, ears focused in for only her name.

"Up next, a 20 dollar donation from Mikuuuuuuu—Woah, that's a lot of U's," the sound of Teto's chuckle resounded through Miku's headphones, but the streamer quickly cleared her throat and got back to reading the message.

"*Your streams have really helped me not feel lonely this past week so thank you for always going live and being*—Awww, thank you so much! Really glad you enjoy the content! Now, next we have..."

Any other words jumbled together, only the sweet tone of her voice mumbled in the background as Miku's hand moved on autopilot to the clip button.

She made Teto laugh! Teto had read her name and words and smiled at her and-!

Tears began to prick at the corners of her eyes. Relief mixed deep with her exhaustion and she felt the droplets begin to run down her cheeks.

Wow! She knew Teto was real, that she had been watching a real person through the screen, but speaking to her and being acknowledged for her efforts... Wow!

The stream continued on without her, blurry cubes moving on her monitor as Miku's mind wandered. She was so silly to ever think her support meant nothing. The warmth in her chest *proved* it was worth so much more. Teto cared about all her viewers, Miku included! If she felt like this just from sending a dono, Teto must love receiving something like this so many times over.

Miku definitely had to do this again.

Old towels lined the bathroom's tile floor, were thrown haphazardly onto the sink's counter, and wrapped around the phone silently playing one of Teto's streams. Miku's eyes flicked between the bright video game and the mirror, guiding the dye brush down the bleached strands of her hair.

She hated having to stare at herself like this. The harsh bathroom overhead just exaggerated her eye bags and how pale she had gotten recently. The glare it left on her phone screen wasn't fun either. She could barely see the stream.

With the last dot of dye, her head was now covered in red. It was already easy to imagine tying it up in twintails.

Would it turn out alright? The dye looked more pink than it was supposed to, but surely it was the thought that counts! They would be matching, and it wasn't like Miku knew anyone well enough for them to point out the inaccuracies. Or even notice the inaccuracies.

Talking to people had never been easy. With this new interest of hers, it would probably be even harder than before.

But that was fine! Having friends would probably get in the way of watching streams, and dealing with people IRL was so much more complicated than conversations in chat. Sure, they didn't last as long, but it was reassuring that they all understood just how great Teto was.

She had been stupid to think that understanding could exist in real life.

As long as she was there to see Teto go live at the end of the day, everything would be okay. More and more, it felt like the only thing that mattered. If Teto was who was keeping her going, so be it. Teto gave them so much, streaming for hours each night, being

here in return was the least Miku could do.

She analyzed the shelf of energy drinks before glancing back at her wallet to count the bills one more time. The amount stayed the same—not enough.

With a bit of persuasion, her mom had agreed Miku could use the credit card as long as the amount came from her allowance. But superchats were expensive, and so were energy drinks. Now the choice fell between being noticed or the caffeine she would need to even be there...

Decision firm, she grabbed three cans and made her way to the counter as the harsh fluorescent lighting bared down on her tired eyes. She could split them and have half each night. A bit of extra exhaustion was better than abandoning Teto in any way.

Miku blinked awake. Why did her cheek hurt?

She sat up, summoning the strength to pull her head up off the wood. Ah. That's why. She fell asleep at her desk again.

3:49 glowed on the digital clock across her room. The chat still flew by on the screen.

Miku slapped her cheeks. Almost 4AM meant Teto would probably end stream soon. She could stay awake for just half an hour more. Tomorrow—well, today now—was Saturday, and there wasn't anything to wake up early for anyway.

Miku's eyes darted around her room, squinting through the darkness. She had run out of energy drinks last week. What else did she have to keep her focus?

On the corner of her bedside table sat her sketchbook. It sat untouched for so long, likely covered in dust by now. When was the last time she drew anything?

School, homework, streams, passing out in her chair, over and over again. Days blended together. *Weeks* blended together.

Her red dye had grown out to the ends. Only choppy sections of faded pink were left in her hair. She should really redo it soon. But that was just so much effort. Everything was so much effort.

Cans piled around her desk, and her bed covers lay messy and unwashed, blending in with the clutter of her room. A stack of returned papers with increasingly worse grades sat in her drawer, just enough out of sight. Miku's eyes stayed on the screen.

Real life was too complicated. Streams were simple. Supporting Teto was simple. Even as the returns kept diminishing, they would be back up soon. They had to be. She would feel better soon.

The weekly donations weren't the same any more. Hearing Teto say her name still felt good of course, but the first butterflies had become meddled in all the other names read off every hour. Who knows when her mom would notice the transaction read just a bit more each time. It all hurt to think about. The colors flashing on her monitor were simple and the red in the facecam box comforting.

Everything was fine. Teto was live, so she didn't have to think about any of it.

It would all work out for something. It had to.

Just like she was supporting Teto, Teto would support her back. Just by being there. Through the screen. Somehow.

With the soft hum of laughter through her headphones, Miku laid her head back down on her desk and drifted back into simple sleep.

MIKU MIKU BEEEEAMMMMMMMM!!!

UFOFROMMARS

LEMONMOTHY25

PATIENT
FAINTÉ ANT GIRL
I got sick and I won't ever be getting well

ECHO.

Shines at Last

Story by Han
Art by Pesky

The frost had only just begun to set on the night Cecylia Broz went missing.

It had been the very heart of autumn, and the chill in the air kept most from wandering outside to possibly see what happened. If it hadn't been for one of her classmates, a boy who lived near the forest's edge spotting her solitary trek through the window, it would have seemed like she vanished into thin air.

According to his testimony and those of anyone who knew her, she walked up to the woods and entered it without hesitation, completely alone and without speaking a word of it to anyone beforehand.

The immediate reaction had been panic. Countless hours were spent canvasing the forest, desperately searching for any sign of where she could have gone and what could have happened. Nearby towns were warned to be on high alert. For months the remaining teens of the community were placed under a strict curfew to keep the same from happening to them.

But time passed, as it always did, and no further evidence ever came up.

Slowly, the restrictions started to lift. Searches went from daily to weekly until they stopped altogether. The official curfew was eventually dropped, and before long parents stopped caring if their kids went out alone. Even the caution tape blocking off the forest itself was removed before a year had passed.

It was a tragedy, but there was nothing they could do. Cecylia was still lost, still gone, but that had become just another fact

of life. Their community had little changed in the wake of the incident, besides the absence of one teen girl.

The adults completely moved on by the next year, with shaking heads and kind words but nothing concrete to offer. The kids who actually knew Cecylia, though, still whispered. She had never told anyone about leaving for the woods, never hinted that there was anywhere she needed to go or anyone she might want to meet, but that didn't mean she had been quite herself leading up to her disappearance.

It was nothing major enough to be of note to detectives, so they had ignored it in favor of the more concrete eyewitness testimony, as limited as that was. It hadn't even seemed related enough to look into.

But for months before she took off alone, Cecylia had spoken of a fog only she ever saw, and none of the children had quite forgotten that, even as the adults looked away and dismissed it.

Kasandra had never been close enough to Cecylia to have been told about the fog personally, in that time, but she certainly heard about it afterwards. The logical among the crowd assumed she had had a mental health crisis that was both missed and dismissed. The popular rumor, though, suggested that she was spirited away by the fog itself.

Before, Kasandra had agreed with the realists amongst her peers.

Before, she only knew about the fog through the whispered rumors after the fact.

Before, she thought the only connection she had to Cecylia was that they grew up in the same small community but never quite close enough to be associated regardless.

Then Kasandra saw the fog herself.

If the rumors were to be believed, Cecylia had sold it short by a wide margin. She had heard of the girl offhandedly mentioning it was a bit hard to see through a haze no one else experienced, or commenting on it being hotter than one would expect with as much coverage she noticed on a cloudless day.

It was odd, and it was alarming, but it was also simplistic enough that the first day, Kasandra didn't even make the connection between the missing girl's concerns and her own sudden plight.

The morning it started, she woke up the same as usual, only to see a wall of pure white outside her window instead of the pleasant weather that'd been promised by reports.

What she saw was not a haze or some low hanging clouds. The fog was an overwhelming force, a billowing miasma of darkness that covered the entire town. Kasandra could barely

see a foot in front of her face amongst the murky vapor, but when she said as much to her mother...

“It’s just a touch cloudy, dear. You won’t have any trouble getting to school.”

Her walk to school, usually a simple ten minute walk, was suddenly instead a nightmarish trek through an overwhelming darkness that curled around her limbs and blocked out all sight. She was nearly an hour late to school.

What she had hoped was just a bizarre, unfortunate day kept happening. Everyone became frustrated when she seemed distracted. Being on time to anything became impossible, and she didn’t have an excuse anyone would accept. There were just disappointed looks she could just barely make out through the haze, coloring every glimpse of humanity she could manage to take hold of.

(There had been one day where it was clear. One day where the fog was gone, and she could go about life like it was before. No one got annoyed at her and she could see the sunlight through the window. She thought she might have, just possibly, imagined the whole incident.

Kasandra went to bed more at peace than she had been in months.

Kasandra woke up to a world of grey.

It was worse, after that, even as it was the same as it ever was.)

Everything had changed, and no one else noticed, and no one else cared. It was frustrating, it was maddening, and Kasandra wasn’t sure what she was meant to possibly do about it.

Until, one day, she realized there was a movement in the fog. Subtle, barely noticeable, but present all the same: a swirling from a specific direction, always blowing the same way. It took time to figure out where that path could lead, weeks trying to follow the directions only she could see, but she wasn’t surprised by the results.

The frost had only just begun to set on the night Kasandra retraced Cecylia’s steps.

While it was nearly impossible to properly see through both the darkness and the mist, she was still able to reach the forest without much trouble regardless. The fog itself, overwhelming as it was, was still moving all around her, pushing out of its supposed source and swirling away, so all she had to do was move against that current.

If there was anyone around to see, like there had been for Cecylia, Kasandra wouldn’t have known. Cecylia couldn’t have known she had been seen then, either. None of the nearby houses were visible through the murk, outside of an occasional hulking shadow.

If there was anyone around to see, none of them moved to stop her like no one stopped Cecylia either. While there were a few stray pieces of caution tape near the entrance of the forest from the road, brightly colored enough to pop out and be seen, they weren’t positioned in any way that could stop her either. There was nothing in place that could cease what was happening.

The community didn’t care to notice the first time. Why would they now?

She knew she reached the forest only when the ground beneath her shifted from concrete to twigs breaking with her footfalls and occasionally steps sinking more into cold mud than she would prefer it to. It seemed like it had to have been a practical miracle that she didn’t run into any of the trees that had to be surrounding her by this point as she couldn’t see a single one.

The fog had gotten worse, after all, as soon as she entered the threshold. Kasandra, and Cecylia before her, had to have been right about the source coming from the woods. It was a comfort, to be so sure that something in this whole mess couldn’t have been imagined, that she absolutely noticed the direction it seemed to swirl and seep from, until she followed it back here.

She didn’t know what she could possibly find, what could possibly be causing what she’d been experiencing, but it had to be here, amongst the murk that made up her world. If she found it, maybe she could stop it.

Kasandra made a concerted effort into not thinking about the fact that this path has been walked before, and no one had seen Ceyclia since.

It was difficult to find something else to think about, though, in the sea of darkness she found herself having to swim through. Without sight, her thoughts circled wildly through every possibility of how this could end, of what could happen, of what would certainly happen to her.

Then for a moment, for an instant, something disrupted that unending grey.

It was so quick Kasandra wasn't even sure what it was that she saw. A flash of a large, dark shadow that was gone as quickly as it appeared. It was large enough, in fact, that she instinctively shot her gaze in its direction, twisting her head so quickly with a gasp that it threw her entirely off balance.

Her footing was impossible to see, through the smog and darkness of the night, but it was easy enough to realize she was on the edge of a hillside when gravity pulled her down and tipped her over the edge.

It was a miracle that her head didn't land on a rock on impact, but it was hard to consider that when it instead bounced off the cold dirt, stealing her breath before she could so much as scream. The hill had to have been at a steep incline as well, since instead of settling where she fell, free to crumple into herself as pain seeped through her body, Kasandra began to tumble further down.

Each turn of her body felt harsher and crueler than the one before it, and it didn't seem to be stopping anytime soon. Did the forest even have hills as tall as this? She couldn't remember any, but then again she never spent much time amongst the trees before, so she couldn't have properly known.

Did Cecylia fall like this? Did she know that it was possible to tumble down, and down, until she wasn't herself anymore, just a story that disappeared into the night? Was that what happened to her?

Was it happening to Kasandra now?

How long would the town look for her, before giving up and moving on? She remembered how quickly everything went back to the way it was, once they stopped caring about the girl who went missing without a trace. It'd probably go by even quicker, this time, the sensationalism and novelty gone.

Just another crazy girl who talked about fog that wasn't there disappearing into it, who'd only be mentioned in whispers and legends by a year's time.

The pain and dizziness was so overwhelming that Kasandra didn't even actually notice she had stopped rolling until the sound of footsteps cut through the buzzing in her head.

Even then, it took her a moment to even remember how to look up, how to do anything but lay there, sore and weary. The motion was slow going, and her eyes were just barely open to see what stood before her.

She didn't even notice that the fog was, for that instant, gone.

But she did notice the soft smile that greeted her, the hand outstretched to help her up, and the shockingly clean appearance of Cecylia Broz looking down on her.

There was a shadow behind Cecylia, a looming thing that Kasandra was certain had to have been what made her trip to begin with. It probably should have scared her. It would have, if Cecylia's hand didn't look so inviting.

If anyone understood the pain she was in right now, it would be Cecylia. The girl who was ignored, who was dismissed, who was pushed aside until she vanished, from the town first and then from their minds. It would happen to Kasandra too. It'd already started.

The ground was coated in a low hanging mist as she struggled to sit up, which emanated from the feet of the creature hovering in their space, but that didn't seem to matter much as Kasandra took Cecylia's hand and stood up, finally understood.

ANGEL FIELD

thought of you

Poem by Spudie
Art by Cullu

I’ll cling onto the thought of you
Drenching our bodies in the sapphire view
Knuckles white and blood congealing
How much longer can I hold onto this feeling
Frozen ice and pelting snow
The wind blows with the change of my heart
Constant, draining, and never it’ll depart

Irony I feel while I trace my cold fingers around my lips
I hope one day I'd reach your lips
Close enough to envelope me in a dreary kiss
Just to pull away, but you’ve dissolved into mist

I’ll close my eyes
And paint pictures of us
In the fading dripping eclipse of the sky
Hoping that in between the clouds and stars
You'll be right there by my side
Our breaths would be shared under the hurricane highs

One day this will blow over
With you by my side
Or floating up in the sky
My hubris will remain unmarked
As the pleasant memories of you
Turn and swirl down the drain
Somehow the gentlest thing you said to me was okay

I guess I’ll leave it as it is
Ignoring the pounding drums in my heart
That builds with the storm outside
The weather views that
I’ve been plunged into

Put the umbrella down
And brace another day
Without fear or doubt
Tears dripping off my face mix with the rain and shine
A smile cracks from under the surface
Unburdened this will finally be the last time

BITTERSWEET REHEARSAL

PAGE ARTISTS

Cylfa

Ten Thousand Stars - CircusP

@cylfa_art

@cylfa_art

星空★lone

Sad Machine - Porter Robinson

@inkopolis

@hoshizoralone

adrilia

Circles - KIRA

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@adrilia.bsky.social

bluejayboju

Better Off Worse - CircusP

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@bluejayboju

LizzyStarie

Snail Mail - 11vein

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HaloPiece

Mechanical Theseus - Moonslimit

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Ekholocation

Metamorphosis - OOyster

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DioDrawzz

Midas - Kodakami

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mayordea

Pyrite Girl - Riproducer

mayordea.art

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Secret - Ryuuuu

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Catharsis - Maubox

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ZACHATTACK

You're Telling Me A SHRIMP Fried This Rice?! - Jamie Paige

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@zachattacking55

Moonjelly

Entomologists - GHOST

@moonjelly_fool

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Stygian Atelier

Regret Rock - MonochroMenace

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LavenderArts

Language of the Lost - Riproducer

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Velvetterabby

4BLOOD - KIRA

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@velvetterabby

maguro

Machine Love - Jamie Paige

@magurosnacks

@magurosnacks

Ufofrommarss

Magical Cure Love Shot - SAWTOWNE

@ufofrommarss

@ufofrommarss

HYPO

Lie - CircusP

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@xxHYPOxx

Felix

ECHO - CrusherP

@Astrumnm

@Astrumnm

lemonnmothy

Confessions of a Rotten Girl - SAWTOWNE

@lemonnmothy

leonid

I Wish That I Could Fall - Jamie Paige

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adricheri

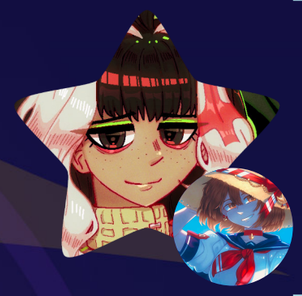
Positive Result - 0TS

@adricheri_art

nena

Hightlight - KIRA

@ichini39



LurkaMargarine

Fainéant Girl - weevildoing

@LurkaMargarine

@lurkamargarine

Bees + Lo

Dream - CircusP

@beehivian

@yowzervisualmedia

Equiz

Crystalline - CIRCRUSH

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korryd

Angel Field - K△FKA

@korryd

MERCH ARTISTS

Mewy101

Weathergirl - FLAVOR FOLEY

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meowonaise

Bittersweet Rehearsal - kyoe

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Kosmical

DIAL LOOP - ePiaeon

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abitofkake — Desktop Wallpaper

Magical Cure Love Shot - SAWTOWNE

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HyeonK — Emotes

Koisuru Beam - Cillia

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Jello — Desktop Wallpaper

Songs For My Lost Ghost Friends - Spellcasting

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Lillastarr — Emotes

Confessions of a Rotten Girl - SAWTOWNE

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WRITERS

Han

Shine at Last

Aura - GHOST

@lowheeledshoes

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Spudie

thought of you

Weathergirl - Flavor Foley

linktr.ee/princess_spud

Bookworm39

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My Heart Is A Museum - Dunni

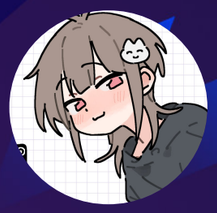
@Bookworm39

@justabookworm39

PotatoVibes

Only One Out There

I Don't Think This Parasocial Relationship Is Working Out - 3xBlast



@potatoisvibing

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SPOT ARTISTS

Pesky

Illustrated for: Han

@peskypixel

cullu

Illustrated for: Spudie

@cullu

@cullullu

MODS

Max-Cat
Graphic Mod

@max-0-cat

Aster
Host, Social Media + Formatting Mod

@asterriism

@asterriism

@asterriism.bsky.social

Ao
Promo Artist

@aosoju

@ao.soju

viebirdy
Art Mod

@viebirdy

Adri
Intern + Page Artist (Circles - KIRA)

@adrilia

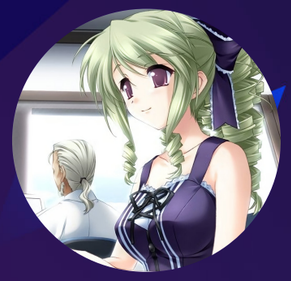
@adrilia.bsky.social

MelloWammy
Merch Mod

@mw-arts

@mellowammy

@mellowammy



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nena
Little Robin
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Lavender Arts
SIGNATURES